
Mental health indicators as predictor frailty in old age

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Introduction: On the basis of studying the condition of frailty we highlight the model of Fried et al. (2001) that underlies the Phenotype of Frailty as a syndrome consisting of five criteria: weight loss, endurance, physical activity, slowness and weakness. The elder is considered frail if has impairment in three of these areas. It is known that this condition enhances the risk of disability and death.

Objectives: Identify dimensions related to mental health that may be predictive of the frailty condition. **Methods:** This study includes a representative sample, stratified by age group, of elders living in the community, in 10 villages, in the municipality of Guimarães, in Portugal (n=338) where an extensive protocol of frailty was created.

Results: It was found that 48 elders (14,2%) did not score in any of the five frailty criteria; 172 (50,9%) scored in 1 to 2 frailty criteria and 118 (34,9%) took 3 to 5 criteria defined by the frailty phenotype. From the analysis of the logistic regression models we see that biobehavioural variables and geriatric indicators precipitate the condition of frailty. In terms of mental health indicators the presence of depressive symptoms (OR=4,2, 95% IC 1,9-9,2) and cognitive impairment (OR=2,9, 95% IC 1,6-5,3) are predictors of the condition of frailty in the elderly.

Conclusions: It seems that the condition of frail person includes domains that are connected to mental health, namely the presence of depressive symptoms and cognitive impairment so they should be taken into consideration in order to delay this condition in old age. **References** Fried, L., Tangen, C., Walston, J., Newman, A., Hirsch, C., Gottdiener, J., Seeman, T., Tracy, R., Kop, W., & Burke, G. (2001). Frailty in Older Adults: Evidence for Phenotype. *Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences*, 56 A(3), 146-156.